IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended): A method of ~~building~~ attempting to build credentials for a user of a device connected to a network, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

providing, ~~a plurality of credential descriptors~~ to a first credential builder included in a first device connected to the network, a credential descriptor that describes a plurality of credentials;

using the first credential builder to attempt~~ing~~ to build ~~credentials corresponding to~~ at least one of the credentials described by the credential descriptors ~~using the first credential builder~~;

providing ~~at least one~~a credential descriptor that describes at least one ~~for which a corresponding~~ credential ~~was~~ not built ~~in~~ by the first credential builder~~the first building step~~ to a second credential builder included in a second device connected to the network; and

using the second credential builder to attempt~~ing~~ to build ~~credentials corresponding to~~ at least one credential described by the~~of the~~ credential descriptor~~descriptors~~ provided ~~in the second providing step using the second credential builder~~to the second credential builder.

2. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1 further including ~~the steps of~~:

providing the credentials built using the first and second credential builders to a credential evaluator included in the first device or the second device; and

evaluating the built credentials by using the credential evaluator to determine whether the built credentials satisfy the ~~plurality of~~ credential ~~descriptors~~ descriptor for the device.

3. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1 further including ~~the steps of~~:

providing the credentials built using the first and second credential builders to a credential evaluator included in a device connected to the network that is different from the first and second devices; and

evaluating the built credentials by using the credential evaluator to determine whether the built credentials satisfy the ~~plurality of~~ credential ~~descriptors~~ descriptor for the device.

4. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1 further including ~~the steps of~~:

providing ~~at least one~~a credential descriptor that describes at least one ~~for which a corresponding~~ credential ~~was~~ not built in the second building step to the first credential builder; and

attempting to build credentials corresponding thereto by using the first credential builder.

5. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1 further including ~~the steps of~~:

providing ~~at least one~~ a credential descriptor that describes at least one ~~for which a corresponding~~ credential ~~was~~ not built ~~in~~ by using either the first or the second ~~building step~~credential builder to a third credential builder included in a device connected to the network that is different from the first and second devices; and

using the third credential builder to attempt~~ing~~ to build at least one credential~~credentials~~ described by the credential descriptor provided to ~~corresponding thereto using~~ the third credential builder.

6. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1 further including ~~the step of~~ generating the ~~plurality of~~ credential descriptor~~descriptors~~ for the device.

7. (Currently Amended): A system used to attempt to build credentials for a user of a device connected to a network, comprising:

a first credential builder operative to build credentials described by ~~corresponding to at least one of a plurality of~~a credential descriptor~~descriptors~~ for the device; and

a second credential builder operative to build ~~credentials corresponding to~~ at least another one of the ~~plurality of~~credentials described by the credential descriptor~~s~~ for the device,

wherein the first credential builder and the second credential builder are included in different devices connected to the network.

8. (Original): The system of claim 7 further including a master credential evaluator operative to evaluate credentials built by the first and second credential builders.

9. (Original): The system of claim 8 wherein the credential evaluator is included in the same device as the first credential builder or the second credential builder.

10. (Currently Amended): The system of claim 8 wherein the credential evaluator is included in a device different from the first and second devices ~~including the first and second credential builders~~.

11. (Currently Amended): A method of ~~building~~ attempting to build credentials for a user of a device, the method comprising ~~the steps of:~~

providing a master ~~plurality of~~ credential ~~descriptors~~ descriptor to a master credential builder that includes a plurality of credential builders, ~~for building a corresponding plurality of different types of credentials for the device~~each of which:

A) is associated with a respective credential type;

B) takes an input that includes an input set of zero or more credentials and an input credential descriptor that describes at least one credential to be built;

C) attempts to build a given credential described by the credential builder if the given credential is of the credential type associated with that credential builder; and

D) generates an output that includes:

i) an output set of credentials that includes the input set of credentials as well as any credential that that credential builder has been successful in building; and

ii) an output credential descriptor that describes each credential described by the input credential descriptor that that credential builder has not been successful in building,

the credential builders being linked in a series in such a manner that the input credential descriptor and set of credentials of each credential builder but the first credential builder in the series include the output credential descriptor and set of credentials of the preceding credential builder; and

employing the master credential builder to attempting to build at least one ~~credentials~~ credential described by~~corresponding to at least one of~~ the master credential ~~descriptors~~descriptor ~~using the master credential builder~~.

12. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 11 wherein, if the master credential builder has built credentials as a result of having attempted to build credentials, the method further ~~including~~ includes~~the steps of~~:

providing the credentials built by using the master credential builder to a master credential evaluator that includes a plurality of credential evaluators for evaluating a corresponding plurality of different types of credentials for the device; and

using the master credential evaluator to ~~evaluating~~ evaluate the ~~built~~ credentials provided thereto ~~by using the master credential evaluator~~ to determine whether ~~the~~ those ~~built~~ credentials satisfy the ~~plurality of~~ credential ~~descriptors~~ descriptor for the device.

13. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 11 further including ~~the step of~~ generating the ~~plurality of~~ credential ~~descriptors~~ descriptor for the device.

14. (Currently Amended): Apparatus used to attempt to build credentials for a user of a device, comprising[[:]]

a master credential builder for building credentials described by ~~corresponding to at least one of~~ a ~~plurality of~~ credential ~~descriptors~~ descriptor for the device, the master credential builder including a plurality of credential builders, each of which:

A) is associated with a respective credential type;

B) takes an input that includes an input set of zero or more credentials and an input credential descriptor that describes at least one credential to be built;

C) attempts to build a given credential described by the credential builder if the given credential is of the credential type associated with that credential builder; and

D) generates an output that includes:

i) an output set of credentials that includes the input set of credentials as well as any credential that that credential builder has been successful in building; and

ii) an output credential descriptor that describes each credential described by the input credential descriptor that that credential builder has not been successful in building,

the credential builders being linked in a series in such a manner that the input credential descriptor and set of credentials of each credential builder but the first

credential builder in the series include the output credential descriptor and set of credentials of the preceding credential builder~~operative to build a credential of a different type for the device~~.

15. (Currently Amended): The apparatus of claim 14 further including a master credential evaluator for, if the master credential builder has built credentials as a result of having attempted to build credentials, evaluating the credentials built by the master credential builder to determine whether the ~~built~~ credentials built by the master credential builder satisfy the ~~plurality of~~ credential ~~descriptors~~ descriptor for the device, the master credential evaluator including a plurality of credential evaluators operative to evaluate a corresponding plurality of different types of credentials for the device.

16. (Currently Amended): The apparatus of claim 14 further including a credential descriptor generator for generating the ~~plurality of~~ credential descriptor~~descriptors~~ for the device.

17. (Currently Amended): A method of ~~building~~ attempting to build credentials for a user of a device, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

providing a ~~plurality of~~ credential ~~descriptors~~ descriptor to a master credential builder, the master credential builder including at least one credential builder that:

A) is associated with a respective credential type;

B) takes an input that includes an input set of zero or more credentials and an input credential descriptor that describes at least one credential to be built;

C) attempts to build a given credential described by the credential builder if the given credential is of the credential type associated with that credential builder; and

D) generates an output that includes:

i) an output set of credentials that includes the input set of credentials as well as any credential that that credential builder has been successful in building; and

ii) an output credential descriptor that describes each credential described by the input credential descriptor that that credential builder has not been successful in building;

adding at least one different credential builder to the master credential builder to form a modified master credential builder in such a manner that the credential builders are so linked in a series that the input credential descriptor and set of credentials of each credential builder but the first credential builder in the series include the output credential descriptor and set of credentials of the preceding credential builder; and

using the modified master credential builder to ~~attempting~~ attempt to build credentials corresponding to at least one of the plurality of credential descriptors ~~using the modified master credential builder~~.

18. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 17 further including ~~the steps of~~:

providing the ~~different~~ credentials built by the modified master credential builder to a master credential evaluator;

forming a modified master credential evaluator by adding to the master credential evaluator different credential evaluators corresponding to at least a portion of the ~~different~~ credentials provided to the master credential evaluator ~~to the master credential evaluator to form a modified master credential evaluator~~; and

evaluating the credentials corresponding to at least one of the ~~credentials~~ credential evaluators by using the modified master credential evaluator.

19. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 18 further including ~~the step of~~ removing credential evaluators that do not correspond to at least one of the credentials from the master credential evaluator.

20. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 17 further including ~~the step of~~ generating the ~~plurality of different~~ credential ~~descriptors~~ descriptor for the device.

21. (Currently Amended): A method of ~~building~~ attempting to build credentials for a user of a device, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

providing a ~~plurality of~~ credential ~~descriptors~~ descriptor to a master credential builder, the master credential builder including a plurality of credential builders, each of which:

A) is associated with a respective credential type;

B) takes an input that includes an input set of zero or more credentials and an input credential descriptor that describes at least one credential to be built;

C) attempts to build a given credential described by the credential builder if the given credential is of the credential type associated with that credential builder; and

D) generates an output that includes:

i) an output set of credentials that includes the input set of credentials as well as any credential that that credential builder has been successful in building; and

ii) an output credential descriptor that describes each credential described by the input credential descriptor that that credential builder has not been successful in building,

the credential builders being linked in a series in such a manner that the input credential descriptor and set of credentials of each credential builder but the first

credential builder in the series include the output credential descriptor and set of credentials of the preceding credential builder;

removing at least one of the credential builders from the master credential builder to form a modified master credential builder; and

using the modified master credential builder to ~~attempting~~ attempt to build credentials corresponding to at least one of the credentials described by the credential ~~descriptors~~ descriptor~~using the modified master credential builder~~.

22. (Currently Amended): Apparatus used to attempt to build credentials for a user of a device, comprising:

a master credential builder including a plurality of credential , each of which:

A) is associated with a respective credential type;

B) takes an input that includes an input set of zero or more credentials and an input credential descriptor that describes at least one credential to be built;

C) attempts to build a given credential described by the credential builder if the given credential is of the credential type associated with that credential builder; and

D) generates an output that includes:

i) an output set of credentials that includes the input set of credentials as well as any credential that that credential builder has been successful in building; and

ii) an output credential descriptor that describes each credential described by the input credential descriptor that that credential builder has not been successful in building,

the credential builders being linked in a series in such a manner that the input credential descriptor and set of credentials of each credential builder but the first credential builder in the series include the output credential descriptor and set of credentials of the preceding credential builder~~builders operative to build credentials~~

~~corresponding to at least one of a plurality of credential descriptors for the device~~; and

at least one processor operative to execute first program code to remove at least one credential builder from the master credential builder in response to a first event, and second program code to add at least one credential builder to the master credential builder in response to a second event.

23. (Original): The apparatus of claim 22 further including a master credential evaluator including a plurality of credential evaluators operative to evaluate credentials built by the master credential builder, the at least one processor being operative to execute third program code to remove at least one credential evaluator from the master credential evaluator in response to a third event, and operative to execute fourth program code to add at least one credential evaluator to the master credential evaluator in response to a fourth event.

24. (Currently Amended): The apparatus of claim 22 further including a credential descriptor generator for generating the ~~plurality of~~ credential ~~descriptors~~ descriptor for the device.

25. (Currently Amended): A method of ~~building~~ attempting to build credentials for a user of a device, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a master credential builder having ~~a~~ at least one credential builder builder that:

A) is associated with a first type of credential;

B) takes an input that includes an input set of zero or more credentials and an input credential descriptor that describes at least one credential to be built;

C) attempts to build a given credential described by the credential builder if the given credential is of the type of credential associated with that credential builder; and

D) generates an output that includes:

i) an output set of credentials that includes the input set of credentials as well as any credential that that credential builder has been successful in building; and

ii) an output credential descriptor that describes each credential described by the input credential descriptor that that credential builder has not been successful in building; and

~~for building a first type of credential;~~

in response to a predetermined event, forming a modified master credential builder by adding ~~an additional credential builder~~ to the master credential builder an additional credential builder, associated with ~~for building~~ a type of credential different from the first type of credential, in such a manner that the credential builders are so linked in a series that the input credential descriptor and set of credentials of each credential builder but the first credential builder in the series include the output credential descriptor and set of credentials of the preceding credential builder~~to form a modified master credential builder~~; and

attempting to build at least one credential by using the modified master credential builder.

26. (Currently Amended): Apparatus used to attempt to build credentials for a user of a device, comprising:

a master credential builder, having a credential builder that:

A) is associated with a first type of credential;

B) takes an input that includes an input set of zero or more credentials and an input credential descriptor that describes at least one credential to be built;

C) attempts to build a given credential described by the credential builder if the given credential is of the credential type associated with that credential builder; and

D) generates an output that includes:

i) an output set of credentials that includes the input set of credentials as well as any credential that that credential builder has been successful in building; and

ii) an output credential descriptor that describes each credential described by the input credential descriptor that that credential builder has not been successful in building ~~operative to build a first type of credential~~; and

a processor operative, in response to a predetermined event, to execute program code to add at least one credential builder to the master credential builder in such a manner that the credential builders are so linked in a series that the input credential descriptor and set of credentials of each credential builder but the first credential builder in the series include the output credential descriptor and set of credentials of the preceding credential builder ~~in response to a predetermined event~~, the at least one added credential builder being operative to build a type of credential different from the first type of credential.

27. (Canceled)

28. (Canceled)

29. (Canceled)

30. (Canceled)

31. (Currently Amended): Apparatus used to attempt to build credentials for a user of a device connected to a network, comprising:

means for generating for the device a ~~plurality of~~ credential ~~descriptors~~descriptor that describes a plurality of credentials~~for the device~~;

means for providing the credential ~~descriptors~~descriptor to a first credential builder;

means for using the first credential builder to build~~ing~~ at least one of the credentials ~~corresponding to at least one of~~described by the credential descriptor~~descriptors using the first credential builder~~;

means for providing to a second credential builder ~~at least one~~a credential descriptor that describes at least one ~~for which a corresponding~~ credential ~~was~~ not built in the first building step ~~to a second credential builder~~; and

means for using the second credential builder to build~~ing~~ ~~credentials corresponding to~~ at least one credential described by ~~of~~ the credential ~~descriptors~~ descriptor provided ~~in~~ to the second ~~providing step~~credential builder ~~using the second credential builder~~;

wherein the first credential builder and the second credential builder are included in different devices connected to the network.

32. (Currently Amended): A method of evaluating credentials for a user of a device, comprising ~~the steps of~~:

providing a master ~~plurality of~~ credential ~~descriptors~~ descriptor and a plurality of credentials for the device to a master credential evaluator including a plurality of credential evaluators, each of which:

A) is associated with a respective credential type;

B) takes an input that includes an input set of at least one credential and an input credential descriptor that describes at least one credential to be evaluated;

C) attempts to evaluate a given credential in the input set if the given credential is described by the credential descriptor and is of the credential type associated with that credential evaluator; and

D) generates an output that includes the input set of credentials and an output credential descriptor that describes each credential that is described by the input credential descriptor but has not successfully been evaluated by that credential evaluator,

the credential evaluators being linked in a series in such a manner that the input credential descriptor and set of credentials of each credential evaluator but the first credential evaluator in the series include the output credential descriptor and set of credentials of the preceding credential evaluator ~~for evaluating a corresponding plurality of different types of credentials~~; and

evaluating the plurality of credentials by using the master credential evaluator to determine whether the plurality of credentials satisfies the ~~plurality of~~master credential ~~descriptors~~descriptor.

33. (Currently Amended): A method of evaluating credentials for a user of a device, comprising the steps of:

providing a master ~~plurality of~~ credential ~~descriptors~~ descriptor and a plurality of credentials for the device to a master credential evaluator including at least one credential evaluator, each of which:

A) is associated with a respective credential type;

B) takes an input that includes an input set of at least one credential and an input credential descriptor that describes at least one credential to be evaluated;

C) attempts to evaluate a given credential in the input set if the given credential is described by the credential descriptor and is of the credential type associated with that credential evaluator; and

D) generates an output that includes the input set of credentials and an output credential descriptor that describes each credential that is described by the input credential descriptor but has not successfully been evaluated by that credential evaluator;

forming a modified credential evaluator by adding at least one credential evaluator to the master credential evaluator in such a manner that the credential evaluators are so linked in a series that the input credential descriptor and set of credentials of each credential evaluator but the first credential evaluator in the series include the output credential descriptor and set of credentials of the preceding credential evaluator ~~to form a modified master credential evaluator~~; and

evaluating at least one of the credentials by using the modified master credential evaluator to determine whether the at least one credential satisfies ~~at least one of~~ the master ~~plurality of~~ credential ~~descriptors~~descriptor.

34. (Currently Amended): A method of evaluating credentials for a user of a device, comprising the steps of:

providing a ~~plurality of~~master credential ~~descriptors~~ descriptor and a plurality of credentials for the device to a master credential evaluator including a plurality of credential evaluators, each of which:

A) is associated with a respective credential type;

B) takes an input that includes an input set of at least one credential and an input credential descriptor that describes at least one credential to be evaluated;

C) attempts to evaluate a given credential in the input set if the given credential is described by the credential descriptor and is of the credential type associated with that credential evaluator; and

D) generates an output that includes the input set of credentials and an output credential descriptor that describes each credential that is

described by the input credential descriptor but has not successfully been evaluated by that credential evaluator,

the credential evaluators being linked in a series in such a manner that the input credential descriptor and set of credentials of each credential evaluator but the first credential evaluator in the series include the output credential descriptor and set of credentials of the preceding credential evaluator;

removing at least one of the credential evaluators from the master credential evaluator to form a modified master credential evaluator; and

evaluating at least one of the credentials by using the modified master credential evaluator to determine whether the at least one credential satisfies ~~at least one of~~ the ~~plurality of~~master credential descriptor~~descriptors~~.

35. (Currently Amended): A method of evaluating credentials for a user of a device, comprising the steps of:

providing a master credential evaluator having a credential evaluator that:

A) is associated with a first type of credential;

B) takes an input that includes an input set of at least one credential and an input credential descriptor that describes at least one credential to be evaluated;

C) attempts to evaluate a given credential in the input set if the given credential is described by the credential descriptor and is of the credential type associated with that credential evaluator; and

D) generates an output that includes the input set of credentials and an output credential descriptor that describes each credential that is described by the input credential descriptor but has not successfully been evaluated by that credential evaluator~~for evaluating a first type of credential~~;

in response to a predetermined event, adding to the master credential evaluator an additional credential evaluator, the credential evaluators being linked in a series in such a manner that the input credential descriptor and set of credentials of each credential

evaluator but the first credential evaluator in the series include the output credential descriptor and set of credentials of the preceding credential evaluator, the additional credential evaluator being associated with ~~for evaluating~~ a type of credential different from the first type of credential ~~to the master credential evaluator~~; and

evaluating at least one credential using the master credential evaluator.